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Bermuda

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

Contents

		Page
	The Territory at a glance	3
I.	Constitutional, legal and political issues	4
II.	Budget	5
III.	Economic conditions	5
	A. General	5
	B. Financial services	6
	C. Tourism	7
	D. Construction	7
	E. Transport and communications	7
IV.	Social conditions	8
	A. General	8
	B. Labour	8

Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 December 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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C. Education 9
D. Public health 9
E. Crime and public safety 10
F. Human rights and related issues 11
V. Environment 11
VI. Military issues 12
VII. Relations with international organizations and partners 13
VIII. Future status of the Territory 14
A. Position of the territorial Government 14
B. Position of the administering Power 14
IX. Action taken by the General Assembly 15

The Territory at a glance

Territory: Bermuda is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, as defined under the Charter of the United Nations, administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor John Rankin (December 2016).

Geography: Bermuda is located in the western part of the Atlantic Ocean, approximately 917 km east of the North Carolina coast of the United States of America. It consists of 8 major and 130 smaller islands.

Land area: 53.35 km².

Exclusive economic zone: 450,370 km²

Population: 61,695 (2016 projection)

Life expectancy at birth: 81.3 years (men: 77.5 years; women: 85.41 years (2016 estimate))

Ethnic composition: Approximately 54 per cent black, 31 per cent white and 15 per cent mixed and other races (2010)

Language: English

Capital: Hamilton

Head of territorial Government: Premier Michael Dunkley

Main political parties: One Bermuda Alliance; Progressive Labour Party

Elections: Most recent: 17 December 2012; next: due to be held by December 2017

Legislature: Bicameral legislature, comprising an 11-member Senate appointed by the Governor (3 at his or her discretion, 5 on the advice of the Premier, 3 on the advice of the leader of the Opposition) and the 36-member House of Assembly, elected in 36 constituencies for up to a five-year term.

Gross domestic product per capita: $96,018 (2015)

Economy: Financial services, tourism

Main trading partners: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and States members of the Caribbean Community

Unemployment rate: 7 per cent (2015)

Monetary unit: Bermuda dollar, pegged at parity with the United States dollar

Brief history: Bermuda was discovered in 1505 by the Spanish explorer Juan de Bermudez, and by 1510, it was referred to as "La Bermuda". It remained uninhabited until 1609, when British settlers on their way to Virginia were shipwrecked on one of its reefs. In 1612, King James I extended the charter of the Virginia Company to include Bermuda. After the Company's charter was annulled in 1684, government passed to the British Crown.

I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

1. The 1968 Constitution of Bermuda has been amended on five occasions, with the most recent revision being in 2003. According to the administering Power, the Constitution gives the Territory almost full internal self-government, leaving the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with a minimum number of constitutional controls. The Governor (and Commander-in-Chief), appointed by the British Crown, is responsible for defence, external affairs, internal security and the police.

2. The Territory has a parliamentary system of government, comprising a governor, a deputy governor, a cabinet and a bicameral legislature. The Governor appoints as Premier the member of the House of Assembly who appears to be best able to command the confidence of a majority of the 36 members of the House, each of whom represents a parliamentary constituency. The Premier heads a cabinet that consists of the Premier and not less than six other Ministers.

3. The law and legal system of Bermuda are based on the application of English common law and the principles of equity, the legislation of the United Kingdom (in force since 1612) that has been extended to Bermuda and acts of the Bermudan Parliament. The judiciary is appointed on the advice of the Chief Justice. There are three courts: the Magistrates' Court, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 provides for the conferral of British citizenship on citizens of British overseas territories.

4. Voters in the general elections or referendums must be 18 years of age and Bermudian by birth or status or non-Bermudian electors on the register as at 1 May 1976. The current Premier, Michael Dunkley, of One Bermuda Alliance, took office on 20 May 2014, succeeding Craig Cannonier, of the same political party, who stepped down from the position. One Bermuda Alliance holds a two-seat majority in the House of Assembly.

5. In 1995, a referendum was held on the question of independence. Of the 58.8 per cent of eligible voters who participated, a small number by Bermudian standards according to the administering Power, 73.6 per cent voted against independence. The then-opposition party, the Progressive Labour Party, had organized a boycott of the referendum among supporters of independence, arguing that the issue should be resolved by general election.

6. In its 2005 report, the Bermuda Independence Commission noted that the racial question had been an ever-present feature of the social, economic and political landscape of Bermuda throughout its history. Racial divisions in Bermuda have, in significant measure, played out in support for, or in opposition to, independence and the method to be used to ascertain the wishes of the population. The Progressive Labour Party, which was the ruling party in 2005, wanted the issue of independence to be settled in the context of an election. The Progressive Labour Party reportedly remains publicly committed to pursuing a policy of disengagement from the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the United Bermuda Party, a forerunner of One Bermuda Alliance, favoured a referendum. The Commission concluded that it was incumbent upon both political parties to share the merits of each method.

II. Budget

7. The fiscal year of the Territory begins in April. According to the administering Power, the funding priorities for the 2015/16 budget continue to be the economy, education, health care and law enforcement. The budget of $1.11 billion and the associated economic stimulus measures were designed to meet the policy objectives in the above-mentioned key areas. Additional budgetary information can be found in the relevant sections below. Government statistics indicate that for the thirteenth consecutive year, the revenue of the Territory in the 2015/16 fiscal year fell short of its expenditure. According to the 2016/17 budget statement, delivered in February 2016, the revenue estimate for that fiscal year is $996.9 million, which is $65.6 million higher than the original estimate for the previous year, while the expenditure estimate is $921.6 million.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

8. The economy of Bermuda is based primarily on the provision of financial services for international businesses and on tourism. According to the administering Power, the industrial sector is small and agriculture is limited, since only about 20 per cent of the land is arable.

9. According to official statistics, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Bermuda in current prices for 2015 was $5.9 billion, a 4 per cent increase from 2014 ($5.7 billion). In 2015, all but 2 (transport and communication, and financial intermediation) of the 15 industries in Bermuda recorded growth in value added. Among the 15, agriculture, forestry and fishing grew by the highest percentage, 14.0 per cent (an increase from $36.7 million to $41.9 million). This was attributed primarily to landscaping and gardening activity, followed by the industry of other community, social and personal services, which grew by 13.7 per cent, resulting from recreational, cultural and sporting activities related to the hosting of the America's Cup races, which will be held in 2017. This increase in economic growth translated to a 4.1 per cent increase in GDP per capita in 2015, which amounted to $96,018. In addition, according to official statistics for the second quarter of 2016 the quarterly GDP at current prices was estimated at $1.44 billion, representing a 2.7 per cent increase on a year-over-year basis.

10. According to the administering Power, the territorial Government is continuing its two-track strategy to improve the economy while simultaneously reigning in government expenditure and public debt. In 2016/17, the territorial Government is continuing to focus on the traditional pillars of the economy, namely, international business and tourism, and to bring in foreign investment, which is vital to a sustained recovery.

B. Financial services

11. According to the administering Power, Bermuda is one of the world's leading international financial and business centres; the sector accounts for about 27 per cent of its GDP. Bermuda is also one of the major jurisdictions worldwide in the fields of large-scale insurance and reinsurance.

12. The Bermuda Monetary Authority, the integrated regulator of the financial services sector, has the power to levy civil fines. The Territory has no central bank. The peg to the United States dollar is managed by commercial banks meeting supply and demand at a one-to-one rate. The banks, rather than the Authority, own the foreign exchange reserves of Bermuda.

13. According to information provided by the administering Power, in the first six months of 2016, 399 new international companies and partnerships were registered in Bermuda, equalling the number of new companies registered in the corresponding period of 2015. In addition, Bermuda registered a total of 22 new insurers and 12 new intermediaries during the first six months of 2016.

14. According to the administering Power, Bermuda has never been a jurisdiction with bank secrecy laws and has maintained a private beneficial ownership register since the 1940s. The existing register contains the details of the ultimate owners of the private corporate entities operating in Bermuda. It is a central register held by a public authority and, as ownership changes over time, it is updated using an active automatic system. Under the regulatory legislation, there are provisions for financial institutions regarding controlling shareholders that require the approval of such persons by the Bermuda Monetary Authority.

15. For more than 70 years, Bermuda has required persons wishing to incorporate a company there to provide information on the ultimate beneficial owner. Currently, such persons are vetted by the Authority (subject to a 10 per cent controller threshold). Transfers of shares to non-Bermudians are also subject to vetting by the Authority. The Authority retains all of the information on the ultimate beneficial owner, which is provided to the Authority as part of the vetting process.

16. The Government exchanges the information with the competent authorities of the United Kingdom and of the United States of America, with which it has entered into international agreements. In April 2016, Bermuda concluded a bilateral arrangement with the United Kingdom on the reciprocal exchange of beneficial ownership information. According to the administering Power, this arrangement, under which law enforcement authorities will have timely access to beneficial ownership information on corporate and legal entities incorporated in the respective jurisdictions, is due to come into effect by June 2017. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 November 2016, the overseas territories and the United Kingdom reiterated their mutual determination to continue to tackle corruption, fraud, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and to further enhance transparency and law enforcement cooperation in the context of financial services. They also reiterated their shared commitment to providing the leadership necessary to meet the June 2017 deadline for the implementation of new arrangements regarding the exchange of beneficial ownership information on

companies incorporated in their jurisdictions and to continuing to provide the highest levels of law enforcement cooperation possible before that date.

17. In September 2013, Bermuda joined the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to facilitate cooperation between jurisdictions in the assessment and collection of taxes, in particular to combat tax avoidance and evasion. The Convention came into force on 1 March 2014. According to the information provided by the administering Power, Bermuda has 106 tax information exchange multilateral agreement partners through its participation in the Convention (with the Group of 20 countries, members of OECD and all States members of the European Union and other countries).

C. Tourism

18. Government statistics indicate that in 2015, 597,210 travellers visited Bermuda (up from 580,260 in 2014), spending a total of $333.1 million (down from $347.9 million in 2014) and directly accounting for 2 per cent of GDP. During the same year, 7.5 per cent of the workforce of the Territory was directly or indirectly employed in tourism, which directly generated 2,509 jobs, a decrease from 2,811 in 2014. With regard to visitors, in 2015, there were 377,396 cruise passengers (up from 355,880 in 2014) and 219,814 air visitors (down from 224,380 in 2014).

19. According to the administering Power, the budget allocated to the Ministry of Tourism Development and Transport for 2016/17 was about $27.8 million, $22.7 million of which was granted to the Bermuda Tourism Authority. The hotel and restaurant sector contributed 4.2 per cent of GDP.

D. Construction

20. According to the administering Power, in 2015, the construction and quarrying sector grew by 6.7 per cent from the previous year, to a value of $190.6 million. Of the work performed, 35 per cent was on residential properties, with 72 per cent undertaken by the private sector and 28 per cent by the public sector. Several hotel developments are ongoing, the new airport terminal is expected to break ground in early 2017 and various other work is to be undertaken in preparation for the hosting of the thirty-fifth America's Cup in 2017.

E. Transport and communications

21. With a network of some 200 km of paved public roads and 400 km of private roads, Bermuda has a high road traffic density, with approximately 79 vehicles per km in 2016. Restrictions on car ownership to one per household, coupled with a policy of allowing no rental cars, have resulted in the development of a public transportation system of buses and ferries. According to the administering Power, Bermuda is in the process of amending its legislation (Motor Car Act 1951) to allow the rental of mini cars for the first time. As at November 2016, a total of 47,256 road vehicles were registered, an increase for the first time in six years.

22. Regular commercial flights connect Bermuda to a number of destinations in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Bermuda has its own air and ship regulatory agencies, with registries maintained by the Civil Aviation Authority and the Bermuda Shipping and Maritime Authority.

23. Government statistics indicate that in 2014/15, the total number of telephone subscribers, approximately 35,000, was the lowest since 1989/90, considered to be a result of the shift towards the use of cellular devices over landlines. According to the report entitled "State of information and communication technology in Bermuda 2014/15", published by the territorial Government, 89 per cent of households and 99 per cent of businesses have access to the Internet.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

24. According to the administering Power, in 2015/16, the Ministry of Community, Culture and Sports was allocated some $88.6 million, around 61.6 per cent of which was designated to ensure access by individuals with insufficient resources to financial assistance.

B. Labour

25. According to official employment data, in 2015, for the seventh consecutive year, job losses were reported in Bermuda. The total number of positions filled in 2015 was 33,319, falling by 156, or 0.5 per cent, from 33,475 jobs in 2014. The breakdown of filled jobs by gender showed that women accounted for 69 fewer positions in 2015, while men represented 87 of the total decline, compared with the previous year. The number of Bermudian job holders also fell to 23,576 in 2015 from 23,833 in 2014. The territorial Government estimates the unemployment rate in 2015 at 7 per cent.

26. The Ministry of Home Affairs has been responding to the challenges created by strengthening its core programmes that assist the population in finding employment and training the workforce to meet the criteria for the jobs that are available. In 2014, the Ministry brought together the public and private sectors to devise strategies to improve the economy and generate new jobs, which led to the development of the National Training Plan. Part 1 of the Plan, published in 2014, analysed major economic sectors in order to understand the current job market and determine the way forward for a sustainable workforce in Bermuda. According to the administering Power, Part 2 of the Plan is due to be published in early 2017 and is expected to address strategies for implementation.

27. The Bermuda Job Board, an online national employment database operated by the Department of Workforce Development since November 2013, is available to Bermudians who are seeking employment, with the main objective of consolidating and centralizing the jobs available in Bermuda so as to help to connect workers and employers, allow more opportunities for qualified Bermudians to find employment and ultimately reduce the need for work permit applications. According to the

administering Power, as at November 2016, more than 1,450 employers and more than 8,900 candidates were registered on the Job Board.

28. The Law Reform Committee, established by the Minister of Home Affairs and tasked to review, update and improve the legislative framework for labour, continued its work on the consolidation of labour laws. According to the administering Power, draft legislation is expected to be presented during the 2017 summer legislative session.

29. The new work permit policy, which came into effect on 1 March 2015, contains information on work permit categories, with the aim of encouraging new business start-ups in Bermuda and increasing job opportunities for Bermudians, spouses of Bermudians and permanent residents.

C. Education

30. According to the administering Power, the Ministry of Education was provided with a budget allocation of about $124.5 million for 2016/17 to support its overall objective of providing strategic leadership, supervision and policy direction for the delivery of a high-quality educational curriculum.

31. Education in Bermuda is compulsory and it is free in public schools for all children from 5 to 18 years of age. According to the information provided by the administering Power, there are 10 preschools, 18 primary schools, 5 middle schools, 1 special-needs school and 2 senior secondary schools in the public school system, which had a student population of 5,068 in September 2016. There are a number of private schools, including six offering early primary education, serving some 40 per cent of the pupils of compulsory school age. Those institutions receive no government funding. The total school enrolment in 2016, which included public and private schools and Bermuda College, was 9,658.

32. Bermuda College, the main facility in the Territory for tertiary education, is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. According to the administering Power, the college offers university transfer and vocational and workforce development programmes. It identified 15 institutions with which it has articulation agreements (a process by which one institution matches its courses or requirements to coursework completed at another institution), whereas some of those same institutions have multiple agreements for different programmes. The College also has a list of more than 100 colleges and universities to which local graduates have successfully transferred after leaving it. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for school fees at British universities provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study.

D. Public health

33. For 2016/17, the Ministry of Health, Seniors and Environment was provided with a budget of $194.4 million, representing 17.5 per cent of the total government expenditure, according to the information provided by the administering Power. In

addition to regulation, the Ministry provides policy direction for the health sector, including an acute care hospital, a psychiatric hospital, regulatory bodies for health professionals and health insurance, public health services and the private health sector. The Territory has a hybrid health financing system consisting of direct public funding and social health insurance, supported by government subsidies.

34. Bermuda has an ageing population and a low fertility rate. According to the statistics provided by the administering Power, 17 per cent of the population was expected to be 65 years or older in 2016, compared with 12 per cent in 2006. In 2014, the total fertility rate was 1.42 births per woman, which is below the replacement level of 2.10 births per woman. According to the administering Power, in 2016, life expectancy at birth was estimated at 81.3 years, with men at 77.5 years and women at 85.41 years. Life expectancy is reported as being four years greater for the white population than for the remainder of the population.

E. Crime and public safety

35. The Ministry of National Security holds administrative responsibility for the Royal Bermuda Regiment, the Bermuda Police Service, the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service, Border Control and the Department for National Drug Control. The Ministry works to ensure that the agencies and departments under its authority work in tandem to promote all aspects of safety in Bermuda.

36. The Bermuda Police Service remains committed to ensuring public safety through strong enforcement, community engagement and rigorous investigations leading to convictions. According to the administering Power, there was no significant increase in crime in 2016. The Service continues to focus on five operational policing priorities, namely, to: (a) enhance public confidence; (b) provide highly visible front-line policing; (c) respond quickly to emergencies; (d) conduct timely, quality-focused investigations; and (e) protect vulnerable people. The inter-agency gang task force continues to provide programmes aimed at intercepting and curbing gang-related crime.

37. During 2016, the United Kingdom continued to provide funding for a law enforcement adviser based in Miami, United States, who coordinated, managed and facilitated training and the provision of strategic advice in order to introduce new techniques and skills to the Territory's law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, the HMS *Mersey* and RFA *Wave Knight* were in the Caribbean, from January to July and from July to December 2016, respectively, as part of the North Atlantic patrol tasking of the Royal Navy, ensuring a year-round maritime presence of the United Kingdom and providing humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and crisis communications support in the region. Both ships also worked with other regional navies and coast guards to combat illegal activities on the high seas. During the hurricane season, a larger Royal Navy or RFA ship is on standby to provide humanitarian and disaster relief support to Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

F. Human rights and related issues

38. Core international and European human rights instruments are applied in Bermuda, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In addition, as previously reported, the Government is committed to developing a national gender policy to promote equitable decision-making involving the different needs, constraints and priorities with regard to men and women. According to the administering Power, the territorial Government is also preparing to request the extension to Bermuda of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, while a reservation to article 2 of the Convention may be necessary. This relates in particular to the requirement set forth in the Convention that there should be equality before the law between men and women, since a non-Bermudian husband of a Bermudian woman has fewer rights than a non-Bermudian wife of a Bermudian man. Such discrimination would not be permitted under the Convention.

39. The Human Rights Commission of Bermuda was established in 1982 to administer the 1981 Human Rights Act with the mission to eliminate discrimination through advocacy, education and enforcement. According to the administering Power, on 1 April 2016, the territorial Government transferred the Human Rights Commission to a non-Ministry entity to allow the Commission to better conform to international best practice with regard to independence while allowing the Government to retain jurisdiction over human rights policy development and associated legislative amendments.

40. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the overseas territories, including Bermuda, agreed to work together to conduct a review of reservations to core United Nations human rights treaties ahead of the preparation of the report of the United Kingdom under the universal periodic review conducted by the Human Rights Council, to be submitted in 2017. They also committed themselves to working together to further develop the capacity of territories' national human rights institutions, where established, in line with the international standards set out in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), and to deepen understanding of their shared obligations with regard to international human rights.

V. Environment

41. For 2016/17, the budget of the Ministry of Environment and Planning is approximately $23.5 million. Its functions are to lead Bermuda towards sustainability by protecting the island's natural and built environments. This includes the recent recovery of the Bermuda petrel (known locally as the cahow) from near extinction.

42. According to the administering Power, the Ministry of Environment has prioritized the advancement and expansion of the Sargasso Sea Commission, established pursuant to the Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea, to better manage the wider Sargasso Sea. In 2016, the British Virgin Islands, the Bahamas and Canada joined the Hamilton Declaration, which had originally been adopted on 11 March 2014 by Bermuda, the Azores, Monaco, the United Kingdom and the United States and is a non-binding political commitment by the signatories to work with the Government of Bermuda and the Sargasso Sea Commission to conserve the Sargasso Sea, which is recognized in the Declaration as an important open ocean ecosystem.

43. In addition, in 2016, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was established by merging two similarly mandated departments, the Department of Conservation Services and the Department of Environmental Protection, as the primary government agency responsible for ensuring the proper use of the natural resources of Bermuda and the protection of the environment within the framework of sustainable development. According to the administering Power, the Department currently focuses on evaluation of domestic legislation, policy and programming to invigorate the agriculture sector and to ensure humane and efficient animal management, more effective invasive species control and overall marine management of the exclusive economic zone of Bermuda.

44. About 98 per cent of the electric power in the Territory is provided by a single private entity, which relies exclusively on fossil fuels to generate electricity. The remaining 2 per cent of electric power is provided by the Tynes Bay waste-to-energy plant, which is owned and operated by the Ministry of Public Works.

45. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, in 2016, the Government of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories recognized the impact that climate change had on the economies, infrastructure and ecosystems of the territories and the important interests of the overseas territories in international efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Government of the United Kingdom committed itself to consulting with territorial Governments on the issue of application of the Paris Agreement to the territories. It reiterated its full commitment to consulting with the overseas territories ahead of its participation in international forums on climate change to ensure that their priorities were taken into account and to including them in delegations, where appropriate, while welcoming the territories' links with regional and international organizations.

VI. Military issues

46. Bermuda maintains a defence regiment of some 420 soldiers, namely, the Royal Bermuda Regiment, which includes a long-term "nucleus" of about 140 soldiers and 30 full-time soldiers, in addition to part-time members. According to the administering Power, the Defence Act was amended in 2016 to require that the Regiment be staffed by volunteers. The Government resorts to conscription only if sufficient volunteers cannot fulfil the Regiment's functions. The adult male population of the Territory is subject to conscription by ballot, involving approximately three years of part-time liability for weekly drills in addition to an

annual 15-day camp. All soldiers are paid for their military service. While historically, the ranks of the Regiment have been raised by conscription by ballot, in 2015, the intake was completely volunteer-based for the first time. In addition, according to the administering Power, the Defence Amendment Act 2015 sets out that the required number of members for the Regiment should be raised and maintained through voluntary enlistment and that if that is not met, the Governor may either revise the roles and responsibilities of the Regiment to take account of the shortfall or authorize compulsory enlistment to make up the required numbers.

47. The Regiment regularly cooperates with foreign Governments and militaries, including those of Canada, Jamaica and the United States, and assists in disaster relief operations in other territories administered by the United Kingdom.

48. In addition, according to the administering Power, the Royal Bermuda Regiment Boat Troop assists the Bermuda Police Service with inshore maritime patrolling and policing requirements. According to the administering Power, legislation is under preparation to establish a full-time marine boat troop, to be staffed by solders of the Regiment and to allow the Regiment to fully assume such a responsibility.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

49. Bermuda is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Caribbean Community and the Caribbean Common Market, and a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, which was set up to combat money-laundering. The Financial Intelligence Agency of Bermuda is a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, and the Bermuda Monetary Authority is a member of regional and international financial regulatory bodies, including the International Association of Insurance Supervisors, the International Organization of Securities Commissions and the Group of International Finance Centre Supervisors. Bermuda also plays a key role in the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes of OECD as a member of its peer review group. In addition, Bermuda participates in the Sea Turtle Conservancy, the Caribbean-United States Security Cooperation Dialogue, the International Trade Union Confederation, the International Criminal Police Organization and the International Olympic Committee.

50. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Bermuda is associated with the European Union but is not a part of it. At the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, in 2016, the United Kingdom committed itself to involving Gibraltar and the overseas territories as it prepared for negotiations to leave the European Union, in accordance with their various constitutional relationships with the United Kingdom, to ensure that their priorities were taken into account. Since January 2014, the Territory has been a partner under the 2013 Overseas Association Decision of the Council of the European Union, which was approved, inter alia, in an effort to move from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the European Union worldwide.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

51. Information regarding developments on the future status of Bermuda is reflected in section I above.

B. Position of the administering Power

52. At the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 10 October 2016, during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

53. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories. Security, Success and Sustainability*, his Government had worked closely with the overseas territories to further develop those partnerships. At annual meetings of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the territories had reviewed strategy and commitments and, in 2015, the United Kingdom had affirmed its commitment to the advancement of the peoples of the territories, their just treatment and protecting them from abuses and the importance of promoting their right to self-determination. His Government's fundamental responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their peoples.

54. In the 2016 communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed themselves to exploring ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. It was also stated that, should a Territory with a permanent population wish it, the United Kingdom would continue to support its request to be removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. They agreed that the fundamental structure of their constitutional relationships was the right one — powers were devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the United Kingdom's retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities. They also agreed upon the need to continue their engagement on those issues to ensure that constitutional arrangements worked effectively to promote the best interests of the territories and of the United Kingdom.

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

55. On 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 71/110, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2016 (A/71/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Bermuda to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of decolonization of Bermuda, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which was also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of Bermuda to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Stressed the importance of the 2005 report of the Bermuda Independence Commission, which provided a thorough examination of the facts surrounding independence, and continued to regret that the plans for public meetings and the presentation of a Green Paper to the House of Assembly followed by a White Paper outlining the policy proposals for an independent Bermuda had so far not materialized;

(e) Underlined the need further to strengthen good governance, transparency and accountability in government for the benefit of the Territory;

(f) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public educational outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(g) Welcomed the active participation of Bermuda in the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

(h) Stressed the importance of the Special Committee being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Bermuda and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Bermuda and the administering Power;

(i) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in Bermuda, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(j) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

(k) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[1] including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supported, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(l) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(m) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Bermuda and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and on the implementation of the present resolution.

[1] Resolution 70/1.